

**George Washington to Israel Putnam, March 29, 1776, Instructions, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.**

**ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO MAJOR GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM**

Head Quarters, Cambridge, March 29, 1776.

As there are the best Reasons to believe that the Enemy's Fleet and Army, which left Nantasket Road last Wednesday Evening, are bound to New York, to endeavour to possess that important Post, and if possible secure the Communication by Hudson's River to Canada. It must be our Care to prevent them from accomplishing their Designs. To that End, I have detached B. Genl. Heath with the whole Body of Rifle Men, and five Battalions of the Contl. Army by the Way of Norwich in Connecticut to New York. These, by an Express arrived yesterday from Genl. Heath, I have Reason to believe are in New York. Six more Battalions under General Sullivan march this Morning by the same Rout, and will, I hope, arrive there in eight or ten Days at farthest. The Rest of the Army will immediately follow in Divisions, leaving only a convenient Space between each Division, to prevent Confusion, and Want of Accommodation upon their March. You will no Doubt make the best Dispatch in getting to New York. Upon your Arrival there, you will assume the Command, and immediately proceed in continuing to execute the Plan proposed by M. Genl. Lee, for fortifying that City, and securing the Passes of the E. and N. Rivers. If, upon Consultation with the Brig'rs General and Engineers, any Alteration in that Plan is thought necessary, you are at Liberty to make it, cautiously avoiding to break too much upon his main Design, unless where it may be apparently necessary so to do, and that by the general Voice and Opinion of the Gentlemen above mentioned.

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You will meet the Qt. Mr. General, Colo. Mifflin, and Commissary Genl. at New York. As they are both Men of excellent Talents in their different Departments, you will do well to give them all the Authority and Assistance they require, and should a Council of War be necessary, it is my Direction they assist at it.

Your long Service and Experience will, better than any particular Directions at this Distance, point out to you the Works most proper to be first raised, and your Perseverance, Activity and Zeal will lead you, without my recommending it, to exert every Nerve to disappoint the Enemy's Designs.

Devoutly praying that the Power which has hitherto sustained the American Arms, may continue to bless them, with his divine Protection, I bid you Farewell.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>he draft is in the writing of Horatio Gates.